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HOME STUDIES SPRING/SUMMER SESSION 1989

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

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SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

by

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with

Dianne Davis, Research Officer

and

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January 1990

Report No. 25–1989-90

Director, Evaluation and Project Research: Olga Kuplowska

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Abstract No. 25–1989-90

HOME STUDIES
SPRING/SUMMER SESSION 1989
SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

by

Robert Brown, Research Officer
Dianne Davis, Research Officer
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(TVOntario, Evaluation and Project Research, Report No. 25–1989-90, 23 pp.)

In Spring 1989, TVOntario's Home Studies area launched a new viewing block. The Spring-Summer 1989 Session, as it is called, lasted from May until August and included 61 courses broadcast during daytime, evening, weekdays, and weekends.

Evaluation and Project Research was asked to undertake an evaluation of the TVOntario summer courses offered in 1989 by the Creative Head of Home Studies. As a first step, an overview of characteristics in the Spring-Summer courses was undertaken. This overview synthesized information about the courses that was already available at TVOntario, and looked at previous part-time learning audiences, to identify viewing and registration patterns. Results from this are presented separately, in Home Studies Spring-Summer 1989 Courses: A Descriptive Report (Evaluation and Project Research Report No. 24–1989-90). A summative evaluation of courses was undertaken, with a telephone interviews of Spring-Summer 1989 registrants, supplemented by focus group discussions with other registrants from this session.

The first phase of the study, telephone interviews, was undertaken to ascertain the following: reasons for registration; information about attitudes on enrollment, degree of learning, level of satisfaction with the course, utilization of materials, reason for summer registration, perception of Home Studies in general, areas that participants would like for future inclusion.

Ninety-nine participants were selected from 5 Spring-Summer 1989 courses to participate in the telephone interviews. The 5 courses were selected in consultation with the Creative Head of Home Studies to represent a variety of types of offerings. The telephone interview sample was somewhat older but otherwise similar to those from most previous Evaluation and Project Research studies: a majority were university or college graduates; most occupations were professional/technical, office/clerical, or retired. Twenty-five percent were under 35; 32 percent were between 35 and 39, while 41 percent were over 50. In addition, most (61 percent) have taken continuing or distance education in the last 5 years.

In the second phase of the study four focus groups were conducted with 27 registrants from 5 Spring-Summer 1989 courses (different courses from those selected for the telephone interviews). The objectives of the focus groups were to ascertain: the reasons for enrollment; what participants thought of specific terms used in the Home Studies area; how Home Studies relates to other courses and free-time activities; perception of TVOntario's home study offering; and attitudes towards the types of courses offered. It should be noted that those who participated in the focus groups were motivated enough to take the time to come in to TVOntario to discuss their experiences.

A majority of the participants in the telephone interviews and focus groups first found out about their course through the TVOntario on-air promotion, or through watching the programs. This may indicate that other forms of advertising and publishing have been less effective than desired.

TVO
MACHINE

As in previous Home Studies evaluations the majority of the participants appeared to register for "goal- oriented" reasons rather than for "general interest." Most of the participants were interested in the subject matter (e.g., in sailing, or water colour painting) well before they discovered TVOntario courses on the subject. This is important to note because these courses are often designed to introduce a subject, yet attract registrants who are looking for more advanced information.

Similar to past Evaluation and Project Research evaluations the telephone interview participants did not seem to engage in the usual linear approach to materials. In general Home Studies registrants who undertake these courses are likely to watch some or most of the programs and read some or most of the material, depending on their schedule constrai nts (e.g., enough time, access to materials) and learning goals (they may not read material or watch programs they consider to be irrelevant). Slightly over half of the telephone interview participants read most or all of the textbook or workbook, slightly under half saw most or all of the programs.

Discussion with focus group participants indicated that some participants had difficulty using the print material because they could not connect it to the programs: they could not remember the programs (having received the material from TVOntario after seeing the programs), or they were expected to use information in the program, but could not.

Many (up to half) taped at least one program on a VCR. In focus group discussion, those who hadn't taped indicated that they would have, if they had a VCR, or could understand how to record on their VCR.

When they ordered the print material, most participants had no real idea of what it consisted of. Sometimes there was, as a result, a difference between what participants expected, and what they received from TVOntario.

Participants in the focus groups had a very limited knowledge of Home Studies offerings outside the course they had registered in. For example, few knew that Home Studies was offering 61 courses over the Spring-Summer session (many guessed 10 or 15) or had an idea of the topics available. Such a lack of knowledge may be related to how most registrants find out about their courses: through on-air promotions and coming across the programs while they are being broadcast.

Most participants in the telephone and focus group samples said that the season was irrelevant or that ordering in spring or summer was somewhat disadvantageous. Nearly two thirds had registered in the spring or summer because they had just found out about the course or thought spring/summer would be the only time the course was offered.

Although a majority of those in the telephone evaluation said that they would describe what they took as a "television course," or as a "course," many were hesitant about this description. The focus group participants likewise expressed uncertainty. Some thought of it as a course; others as optional print support that one could order. It appears that the more a Home Studies offering resembles their experience of a "course," the more likely they are to consider it as one. In the focus groups, participants thought "French in Action" (highly structured) was a "course," but were not as certain about "Exercise and Health" (where the print material was not fully integrated with the program).

Participants did not suggest anything especially different or innovative regarding advertising; they suggested print advertising (which so far may have been not as effective as anticipated) and on air ads (which are already being done). Perhaps one useful suggestion may be to use the Home Studies catalogues more broadly as advertising pamphlets, to increase awareness of the type and breadth of Home Studies courses.

Among the suggestions based on the evaluation findings: reconsider the print advertising used for Homes Studies; give more exact descriptions of what the support material consists of; include the Home Studies catalogue with the learning package to give participants an idea of what other courses are being offered; consider ways to distribute catalogues to interested parties; reconsider the terms "registration" and "course" in reference to their learning systems, as participants' expectations of the material may be misled by this terminology; try to make print support material more integrated and interactive with the television programs; consider addressing VCR copyright regulations and the purchase of series; consider offering courses of a more advanced nature; consider offering a money back guarantee with each course as dissatisfied registrants in the focus groups claimed this influenced them not to "try" other courses.

Abrégé n° 25-1989-1990

« HOME STUDIES »
PRINTEMPS/ÉTÉ 1989
ÉVALUATION SOMMATIVE

préparé par

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(TVOntario, Service de recherche et d'évaluation, rapport n° 25-1989-1990, 23 pages)

Au printemps 1989, le Secteur « Home Studies » de TVOntario a offert un nouveau créneau de diffusion. Le programme printemps/été 1989, qui a débuté en mai et s'est achevé en août, comprenait 61 cours télédiffusés pendant la journée, le soir, les jours ouvrables et les fins de semaine.

Le directeur de création de « Home Studies » a demandé au Service recherche et d'évaluation de procéder à l'évaluation des cours que TVOntario a offerts à l'été 1989. Dans un premier temps, cette étude a porté sur les caractéristiques générales des cours du printemps et de l'été, ce qui a permis d'effectuer une synthèse des données sur les cours déjà offerts par TVOntario, et d'étudier la composition des apprenants dans le but d'identifier les tendances sur le plan de l'inscription et du visionnement. Les résultats de cette analyse ont été présentés séparément dans le rappport « Home Studies » Spring-Summer 1989 Courses: A Descriptive Report (Evaluation and Project Research, Report No. 24-1989-1990). Le service a ensuite procédé à une évaluation sommative des cours à l'aide de sondages téléphoniques menés auprès d'élèves inscrits au programme printemps/été 1989 et de groupes de discussion avec d'autres élèves inscrits pendant la même période.

La première phase de l'évaluation, les sondages téléphoniques, visait à déterminer les éléments suivants : raisons de l'inscription au cours ; renseignements sur les attitudes face à l'inscription ; degré de connaissances acquises ; niveau de satisfaction après avoir suivi le cours ; utilisation des documents ; raison du choix d'un cours d'été ; réputation du Secteur « Home Studies » en général ; et domaines que les participants voudraient trouver au programme dans le futur.

TVO
L'CHAÎNE

Quatre-vingt-dix-neuf participants ont été choisis dans cinq des cours offerts à la session printemps/été 1989 pour répondre à des questions au téléphone. Les cinq cours, sélectionnés en collaboration avec le directeur de création, constituaient un échantillonnage représentatif des cours offerts. Le groupe interrogé par téléphone était relativement plus âgé mais semblable, à tout autre point de vue, aux participants aux études précédentes du Service de recherche et d'évaluation : la majorité d'entre eux étaient des diplômés de collèges ou d'universités ; ils étaient pour la plupart membres de professions libérales, techniciens, employés de bureau ou retraités. Vingt-cinq pour cent avaient moins de 35 ans, 32 % étaient âgés entre 35 et 39 ans, et 41 % avaient plus de 50 ans. Par ailleurs, la plupart d'entre eux (61 %) avaient suivi des cours d'éducation permanente ou d'éducation à distance durant les cinq dernières années.

La seconde phase de l'évaluation a porté sur quatre groupes de discussion formés de 27 apprenants qui avaient participé à cinq des cours du programme printemps/été 1989 (différents de ceux choisis pour les sondages téléphoniques). Les groupes de discussion

avaient pour objectifs de déterminer les raisons de l'inscription ; l'opinion des participants quant à la terminologie particulière au Secteur « Home Studies » ; le lien entre les cours de « Home Studies » et d'autres cours et activités libres ; leur opinion sur la qualité des cours de TVOntario et sur la nature des cours proposés. À noter que les participants des groupes de discussion étaient suffisamment motivés pour prendre le temps de venir dans les locaux de TVOntario afin de faire connaître leurs points de vue.

La plus grande partie des participants aux sondages téléphoniques et aux groupes de discussion ont appris l'existence de leur cours en voyant la publicité télévisée de TVOntario ou en regardant les émissions, ce qui semble indiquer que les autres moyens publicitaires et publications n'ont pas eu l'effet souhaité.

Comme l'avaient indiqué les évaluations précédentes effectuées par le Secteur « Home Studies », la majorité des participants se sont inscrits dans un but précis et non pour des raisons d'information générale. Ils s'intéressaient déjà au sujet du cours (par exemple la voile ou l'aquarelle) bien avant de découvrir les cours de TVOntario. Cette précision est particulièrement importante du fait que ces cours, qui sont souvent destinés à présenter les éléments de base d'un sujet, attirent malgré tout des personnes désireuses d'approfondir leurs connaissances.

Comme l'avaient révélé des évaluations précédentes entreprises par le Service de recherche et d'évaluation, les participants aux sondages téléphoniques n'ont pas adopté l'approche linéaire habituelle face aux documents d'accompagnement. En général, les personnes inscrites à ces cours regardent certaines émissions, ou la plupart d'entre elles, et lisent une partie des documents ou la majorité d'entre eux, selon les contraintes auxquelles elles sont assujetties (temps disponible, accès aux documents) et leurs objectifs d'études (elles ont tendance à ignorer les documents ou les émissions qui ne leur semblent pas pertinents). Un peu plus de la moitié des participants aux sondages téléphoniques ont lu la plupart ou la totalité du manuel ou du cahier d'exercices, et un peu moins de la moitié ont regardé la plupart ou la totalité des émissions.

Les discussions de groupe avec les participants ont indiqué que certains ont éprouvé de la difficulté à utiliser les documents, étant incapables de faire la liaison avec les émissions : ils n'ont pas réussi à se souvenir des émissions (ayant reçu les documents de TVOntario après les avoir regardées) ou, étant censés utiliser des renseignements fournis dans les émissions, ils en étaient incapables.

Un grand nombre (jusqu'à la moitié d'entre eux) ont enregistré au moins une émission à l'aide d'un magnétoscope. Parmi les membres des groupes de discussion, ceux qui n'ont pas enregistré d'émission ont déclaré qu'ils l'auraient fait s'ils avaient eu un magnétoscope à leur disposition ou s'ils avaient su comment s'en servir.

Lorsqu'ils ont commandé les documents, la plupart des participants n'avaient aucune idée de ce qu'ils allaient recevoir, si bien que certains ont eu des surprises.

Les membres des groupes de discussion n'avaient qu'une vague idée des cours offerts par « Home Studies », à l'exception de leur cours. Rares étaient ceux, par exemple, qui savaient que le Secteur « Home Studies » proposaient 61 cours dans le cadre du programme printemps-été (10 ou 15 cours était le chiffre avancé par un grand nombre) ou quels étaient les sujets traités. Ce manque d'information est peut-être lié à la manière dont ils apprennent l'existence des cours : messages publicitaires télévisés ou émissions captées par hasard.

La plupart des membres de l'échantillon formé par les groupes de discussion et les participants aux sondages téléphoniques ont déclaré que la saison n'avait aucune importance ou que le fait de passer une commande au printemps ou en été était légèrement désavantageux. Près des deux tiers se sont inscrits au printemps ou en été parce qu'ils venaient juste de découvrir l'existence du cours ou qu'ils pensaient que ce cours ne serait donné que pendant cette période.

Bien que la plupart de ceux qui ont participé aux sondages téléphoniques aient décrit l'émission en la qualifiant de « cours télévisé », ou de « cours », un grand nombre hésitaient à lui donner ce qualificatif. La même hésitation a été notée parmi les participants aux groupes de discussion. Certains ont pensé qu'il s'agissait d'un cours, d'autres de documents de soutien facultatifs qu'il était possible de commander. Plus le cours proposé par « Home Studies » ressemblait aux cours traditionnels qu'ils connaissaient, plus ils étaient enclins à traiter l'émission comme un cours. Dans les groupes de discussion, les participants considéraient que l'émission « French in Action » (fortement structurée) était un « cours », mais ne savaient dans quelle catégorie placer l'émission « Exercise and Health », dont les documents d'accompagnement n'étaient pas entièrement intégrés à l'émission.

Les suggestions des participants quant à la publicité n'ont pas vraiment apporté d'éléments nouveaux : usage de la publicité imprimée (qui jusqu'à ce jour n'a pas été aussi efficace que prévu) et des annonces télévisées (qui existent déjà). Signalons toutefois, une suggestion qui pourrait être utile : l'utilisation systématique des catalogues de « Home Studies » à titre de brochures publicitaires afin de mieux faire connaître la matière et la gamme des cours du Secteur.

Voici quelques recommandations fondées sur les résultats de l'évaluation : réévaluer les annonces publicitaires imprimées qui visent à promouvoir les cours de « Home Studies » ; décrire plus précisément les documents d'accompagnement ; inclure le catalogue de « Home Studies » aux documents du cours pour que les participants soient au courant des autres cours offerts ; envisager divers moyens de distribuer les catalogues aux personnes intéressées ; examiner à nouveau l'utilisation des termes « inscription » et « cours » dans le cadre des systèmes d'études, étant donné qu'ils pourraient induire en erreur ; veiller à mieux intégrer les documents d'accompagnement aux émissions télévisées et les rendre plus interactifs ; étudier la question des droits d'auteur, de l'utilisation du magnétoscope et de l'achat de séries ; étudier la possibilité de proposer des cours d'un niveau plus élevé ; envisager un remboursement de chaque cours en cas d'insatisfaction car certains participants insatisfaits ont déclaré ne pas avoir voulu « essayer » d'autres cours en l'absence d'une telle garantie.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION 1

Background 1

Method 1

RESULTS 3

A. Phase I: Telephone Evaluation 3
1. Sample Description 3
2. How Participants First Heard About the Course 4
3. Ordering the Material 5
4. Previous Exposure to Subject 6
5. Previous Experience in Distance Education 7
6. Utilization of the Material 8
7. Importance of Course Components 9
8. Ordering Materials in the Summer 10
9. Describing Home Studies Courses 11
10. Advertising Home Studies Courses 11

B. Phase II: Home Studies Focus Groups 12
1. Registration 13
2. Previous Experience 13
3. Spring-Summer Schedule 14
4. Use of Materials 14
5. Taping 15
6. Do Participants Think of Home Studies Courses as Courses? 16
7. Knowledge of Other Courses 17

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION 18

Registration 18
Reasons for Registration 18
Utilization of Materials 19
Previous Educational Experience 19
Knowledge of Other Courses 19
Importance of Season in Decision to Register 20
Concept of Courses 20
Advertising 21

RECOMMENDATIONS 22

INTRODUCTION

Background

In Spring 1989, TVOntario's Part-time Learning (now Home Studies) launched an expanded viewing block. The Spring-Summer 1989 Session, as it is called, lasted from May until August, and included 61 courses broadcast during daytime, evening, weekdays, and weekends. It included a higher proportion of prime-time viewing hours than is usually available to Home Studies courses during other seasons.[1]

A wide variety of subjects was offered, including business, recreation, science, personal development, and language. Twenty of the 61 courses were new to TVOntario; several were acquisitions from the United States. According the the TVOntario guide to summer viewing (61 Ways to Enjoy Learning at Home) audiences were encouraged to either view the programs alone, or complement their viewing with viewer's guides, texts, or other course materials. In the on-air promos, however, viewers were encouraged to register for the courses.

The purpose of the expanded spring-summer schedule for television-based courses was to use the summer as a new target season for courses. It was thought this would be an advantageous time because of the lack of competition from other networks, and the shutdown of many educational institutions for summer recess.

A greater than usual promotional effort was undertaken with ads in Ontario newspapers.

Method

The Creative Head of Home Studies requested that Evaluation and Project Research undertake an evaluation of the TVOntario summer courses offered in 1989. As a first step, an overview of characteristics in the Spring-Summer courses was undertaken. This overview synthesized information about the courses that was already available at TVOntario, and looked at previous part-time learning audiences, to identify viewing and registration patterns. Results from this are presented separately, in Spring-Summer 1989 Home Studies Courses: A Descriptive Report (Report No. 24–1989-90).

A summative evaluation of courses was undertaken, with telephone interviews with selected Spring-Summer 1989 registrants, supplemented by focus group discussion with other registrants from different courses. The courses were chosen in consultation with the Creative Head of Home Studies.

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[1] Part-time Learning/Home Studies divides the broadcast year into three "sessions": Winter (January 1- April 31); Spring-Summer (May 1-August 31) and Fall (September 1 to December 31).

I. Telephone Interviews

Telephone interviews were undertaken with 99 participants randomly selected from five Spring-Summer 1989 courses. The interviews were similar to those used in previous PTL/Home Studies evaluations. Objectives of the interviews were to:

- identify reasons for registration
- acquire information about attitudes on enrollment
- investigate degree of learning
- obtain level of satisfaction with the course
- inquire about utilization of materials
- ask why participants took the courses in the spring and summer, rather than at some other time
- investigate audience perception of home studies in general
- inquire about general areas participants would like to see continued, changed and/or improved.

The interviews were conducted during October and early November 1989.

II. Focus Groups with Summer Registrants

Four focus groups (N=27) were conducted with registrants from five Spring-Summer 1989 courses (these courses were different from those selected for the telephone interviews). These focus groups investigated areas such as:

- reasons for enrollment
- what participants thought of specific terms used in the Home Studies area
- how Home Studies relates to other courses and free time activities
- perception of TVOntario's home study offerings
- attitudes towards the types of courses offered.

These focus groups were held in late November and early December 1989. It should be noted that the focus group participants may have been somewhat more "motivated" or "interested" TVOntario Home Studies registrants, as they were willing to attend sessions to freely discuss their experiences without viewing a program and to meet with others from different courses.

RESULTS

A. Phase I: Telephone Evaluation

1. Sample Description

Participants were sampled from five courses, representing a wide range of courses and program characteristics. Selection of the courses was made in consultation with the Creative Head of Home Studies. Courses were selected to represent a variety of topic types and other course characteristics. For example courses which offered various support materials, and had various registration numbers were chosen. Telephone interviews were completed with 20 participants from four courses and 19 from one course, for a total of 99 in the sample.

Approximately half (49 percent) were men and half (52 percent) were women. A majority were university or college graduates; most were professional/technical, office/clerical, or retired. Twenty-five percent were under 35; 32 percent were between 35 and 49, while 41 percent were over 50. The sample is somewhat older but otherwise similar to those from most previous Evaluation and Project Research and Market Research studies.

Table 1: Course breakdown
(number of course participants)

R-2000	20
Academy on the Short Story	20
Learn to Navigate	20
Write Right	19
Focus on Watercolor	20
	99

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics

	(N=99)
1. Age	%
Under 30 years old	15.2
30-34 years old	11.1
35-39 years old	8.1
40-44 years old	17.2
45-49 years old	7.1
50-54 years old	6.1
55-59 years old	15.2
60 years and older	20.2
	100.0

Table 2 (continued)

2. Education	%
Some secondary school	4.0
Completed secondary school	17.2
Some community college	6.1
Completed community college	13.1
Some university	17.2
Completed university	25.3
Some/completed graduate study	17.2
	100.0

3. Occupation	%
Professional/technical	27.3
Retired/pensioned	22.2
Office/clerical	16.2
Skilled or craft worker	15.2
Homemaker	5.1
Salesperson	4.0
Self-employed	3.0
Full-time student	3.0
Unemployed	1.0
Manager/administrator	1.0
Other	2.0
	100.0

4. Gender	%
Female	51.5
Male	48.5
	100.0

Note: Totals many not equal 100 percent due to rounding

2. How Participants First Heard About the Course

Slightly under two-thirds (64 percent) heard about the course through watching the course programs, or as a result of watching an on-air promotion. See Table 3. This finding is again similar to those of previous evaluations of Part-time Learning courses. It is possible that registrants may have heard about the course from other sources but it seems their strongest "memory" is that they were motivated to register by on-air viewing.

Table 3: How Participants First Heard About the Course

"How did you find out about the course?"

	(N=99) %
From watching the television programs	35.4
From a TVOntario on-air announcement	28.3
From a TVOntario calender/booklet	14.1
From a newspaper article or review	7.1
From a TVGuide or other TV listing	6.1
Signal	6.1
Word of mouth	5.1
Magazine announcement	2.0
Other	2.0

Note: Totals may exceed 100 percent due to multiple responses

3. Ordering the Material

Most participants ordered the material to learn more about the subject matter in the courses (e.g., watercolor painting in *Focus on Watercolor*). Around a quarter of the sample had registered for previous Part-time Learning courses (Home Studies). Slightly less than a quarter were also registered in other Part-time Learning courses during this summer. Few (4 percent) had heard about their course before the summer.

Half the sample ordered material *after* the programs began. This is understandable, since most found out about the course by watching the programs, or watching on-air promotions (and it is likely that the on-air promotions would motivate many to watch the programs, and they would then order the material). See Table 4 below.

Table 4: Ordering the Material

	(N=99) %
1. "Why did you order the material?"	
Wanted to find out about the (course subject)	73.7
Supplement existing knowledge	12.1
Build a house (R-2000)	5.1
OTHER	9.1
	100.0

2. "Have you ordered materials from TVOntario before?"

	%
No	72.7
Yes	27.3
	100.0

Table 4 (continued)

3. "Did you register for any other courses this summer?" (from TVOntario)

	%
No	76.8
Yes	23.2
	100.0

4. "Had you heard about (course) before this summer?"

	%
Yes	4.0
No	96.0
	100.0

5. "When did you order the material?"

	%
Before I saw the first program	41.4
After the programs began	49.5
Cannot say	9.1
	100.0

4. Previous Exposure to Subject

For the most part, participants were not introduced to subjects by TVOntario courses. Rather, the TVOntario course supplemented already existing knowledge: over half (54 percent) had read about the subject or taken another course on the subject previous to registering at TVOntario. A further 9 percent were looking for material on the subject, but had been unable to find anything.

Part-time Learning registrants usually register in Part-time Learning courses for two reasons. Some registrants appear to be process-oriented in that they register out of "general interest." However, most registrants in previous evaluations of Part-time Learning courses appear to register for goal-oriented reasons as they desire to learn very specific types of information, usually related to work or existing hobbies. It appears that 63 per cent of the registrants in this evaluation might also be considered to be goal-oriented in that they had been looking for or had found information on the subject previous to registering.

Table 5: Previous Exposure to Subject

"Before ordering the print materials, had you read any materials on the subject or enrolled in a course on the subject?"

	(N=99) %
Yes, had read about the subject or enrolled in a course on the subject	53.5
No, but *looked for* information on the subject	9.1
No had not read, enrolled or looked for information on the subject	37.4
	100.0

5. Previous Experience in Distance Education

Most participants (61 percent) had also taken continuing education or distance education courses in the last 5 years. They would therefore be more familiar with many of the concepts, and the structure, of distance education. See Table 6 below.

Table 6

"In the last 5 years, have you taken any continuing education or distance education course - such as a board of education or community college night course, or University of Waterloo correspondence course?"

	(N=99) %
No	39.4
Yes	60.6
	100.0

(Of those who said yes...)
Was this a credit or non-credit course

	(N=60) %
Credit course	60.0
Non-credit	36.7
Both credit and Non-credit	1.7
Unsure/cannot Remember	1.7
	100.0

Note: Totals many not equal 100 percent due to rounding

6. Utilization of the Material

Slightly over half the sample read most or all of their primary print component (a textbook or workbook); slightly under half read some, little or none of the material. Most (71 percent) were very satisfied with the print material. See Table 7.

Slightly under half (45 percent) saw most or all of the programs; a majority saw half or less of the course programs. Most watched the programs during the week. Over three-quarters had VCR's, and nearly half (49 percent) taped at least one program. See Table 8.

Table 7: Use of Print Material

1. "How much of the (primary print component) did you read?"

	(N=99) %
All of it	34.3
Most of it	18.2
Some of it	19.7
Not much of it	11.1
Have not yet read it	17.2
	100.0

2. "On the whole, were you satisfied or dissatisfied with this material?"

	(N=99) %
Very satisfied	70.7
Somewhat satisfied	20.2
Not very satisfied	5.1
Not at all satisfied	1.0
	100.0

Table 8: Viewing Patterns

1. "How many of the programs did you watch?"

	(N=99) %
Did not view anything	5.1
Saw less than half the programs	32.3
Saw half the programs	17.2
Saw more than half, less than all of them	28.3
Saw all of them	17.2
	100.0

Table 8 (continued)

2. "When did you usually view the programs?"

	(N=99) %
During the week, before 6 pm	16.2
During the week, after 6 pm	42.4
During the weekend, before 6 pm	12.1
During the weekend, after 6 pm	4.0
Weekday and weekend after 6	2.0
Weekday and weekend, before 6	2.0
During the week, before and after 6	1.0
Can't say, don't remember	21.2
	100.0

3. "Do you have a VCR?"

	(N=99) %
Yes	75.8
No	24.2
	100.0

4. "Did you tape any of the programs?"

	(N=99) %
Yes	48.5
No	51.5
	100.0

Note: Totals many not equal 100 percent due to rounding

7. Importance of Course Components

When asked what was the most important element of the course, a majority (58 percent) thought the programs were most important, while around a fifth thought the print material was most important. The differences appeared to relate to learning style. Those who thought the programs most important pointed to the visual demonstrations and examples; thought the programs had better information than the print; or thought it was easier to watch than to read. Those who preferred print liked the fact that it was a permanent reference; thought it more informative than the programs; or preferred the convenience of print. See Table 9

Table 9: Importance of Course Components

"To you, what was the most important: the programs, the primary print component, or the second print component?"

	(N=99) %
The programs	57.6
The primary print component	16.2
The secondary print component	4.0
All are equally important	18.2
Cannot say	4.0
	100.0

8. Ordering Materials in the Summer

Most participants *did not* think Spring or Summer was more appropriate to register in Home Studies Courses, than in Spring or Fall. A fifth said they ordered this summer because they had more time available.

While 21 percent said they would register in the summer again – because they had *more* time in the summer, 28 percent said they would not register in the summer – because they had *less* time then. *Forty-one percent would register depending upon the courses available, rather than because of what season the courses were offered.* See Table 10.

Table 10: Ordering Materials in Summer

1. "What made you decide to 'order the material' this summer, as opposed to some other time like the fall or winter?"

	(N=99) %
I only found out about it this summer	58.6
I had more time available this summer	20.2
Does activity (sailing etc.) in this summer only	3.0
Course not offered other times	3.0
Thought summer was only tim offered	3.0
Other	13.0
	100.0

2. "If you were to register for a TVOntario course again, would you register in the summer?"

	(N=99) %
Yes	21.2
No	28.2
Depends on the course(s) that are offered	41.4
Don't know	9.1
	100.0

Note: Totals many not equal 100 percent due to rounding

9. Describing Home Studies Courses

Participants were asked how they would describe Home Studies courses to a friend. A majority said they would describe the Home Studies offerings as courses (27 percent) or "TV courses" (37 percent). However, many of these expressed some hesitation or reservations – 'course' or 'TV course' was not a perfect description, but the closest approximation they could think of.

However, a substantial minority described the material as something other than a course: as home learning or part-time learning; as enrichment, or information updating; or as a program that has been supplemented by print material. See Table 11.

Table 11: Description of Course

"At TVOntario, we would call (course name) a television course. How would you describe (course name) to a friend?"

	(N=99) %
As a television course	37.4
As a course (not television course)	27.3
Home learning/part-time leaning	16.2
Enrichment, information supplement, information upgrading	9.1
As a program or TV series with print material	5.1
As a partial course, or not a course	5.1
Other	5.1
Don't know	1.0

Note: Totals may exceed 100 percent due to multiple responses

10. Advertising Home Studies Courses

When asked how to publicize Home Studies programs with the general public, participants advocated fairly traditional advertising techniques: advertising in the print media (papers and magazines), on television (both TVOntario and other stations), in the schools, and through the use of brochures.

Table 12: Increasing Public Awareness of TVOntario courses

"In your opinion, how could TVOntario increase public awareness of television courses, such as (course name)?"

	(N=99) %
Advertise in print media (papers and magazines)	41.4
Advertise on TV	22.2
Advertise in schools	10.1
Mail out of course brochures	9.1
Advertise in specific places like malls, clubs where topic is taught/done	6.1
Through TVGuides	6.1
Through pamphlets, fliers, etc.	5.1
(OTHER)	14.1
Doing a fine job already	5.1
Don't know/no opinion	12.1

Note: Totals may exceed 100 percent due to multiple responses

B. Phase II: Home Studies Focus Groups

Four focus groups were conducted, consisting of a total of 27 participants from 5 Spring-Summer courses (Exercise and Health, French in Action, The Weight Craze, The Business of Managing Professionals, and Cartooning With Yardley Jones). Selection of the courses was made in consultation with the Creative Head of Home Studies. Courses were selected to represent a variety of topic types and other course characteristics (e.g., various support materials, various registration numbers). Registrants from each of the courses participated in each focus group. Each group discussed their experiences for approximately one hour.

Focus groups were conducted because they would allow the researchers to go into more depth than was possible with the telephone interviews. It should be noted, however, that the results of focus groups are often slightly more negative than the results of telephone interviews. This is due to the nature of the focus groups which allows the researcher to explore the registrant's difficulties with the courses more fully than in telephone interviews. A substantial amount of time is spent trying to draw out any negative reactions to the materials. In telephone interviews the registrants, for the most part, are very reluctant to give any negative comments and there isn't sufficient time to try to uncover or probe negative feelings. (e.g., short 10 minute interviews, over the phone, a number of topics to cover, calling the registrants at home - at a time that might not be the most convenient time for them.) In the focus groups the registrants have agreed to come to talk about the course at length and there is sufficient time to probe in depth or draw out negative reactions. To some extent the registrants also appear to be buoyed or spurred on by the comments of other registrants. In the telephone interviews, the registrants make their negative comments in isolation with no support. Hearing the comments of other registrants may also trigger ideas for them.

It should also be noted that these focus group participants may be considered to be "more motivated registrants" demonstrated by the fact that they are willing to come to TVOntario to discuss their experiences at length. The researchers also felt that the focus group

participants seemed more motivated than other registrants they had previous telephone contact with. They seemed willing to provide information to TVOntario.

1. Registration

Participants did not really think of 'registration', and did not seem to spend a great deal of time thinking about whether or what they were going to do. They usually 'happened' to come across the programs, or ran across a reference to the courses. Several noted that they were 'grazing' when they came across the courses. They often thought in terms of print support for programs, rather than a 'course'. Some verbatim comments are provided.

"To tell you the truth I didn't 'sign up' for (The Business of Managing Professionals). I was more interested in receiving the written materials. And I had seen a couple of programs - thought there might be something valid in seeing it written because I wasn't about to take note, and ordered it. I then did not continue watching the program – I just looked at the written material."

"I saw (The Weight Craze) program one Sunday morning I think it was, and what the lady was saying was what I had believed, and what other friends of mine had believed, so we wanted confirmation! And we got written confirmation that we really were on the right track."

"Well, I was flipping channels and I saw an ad – the promo for the various courses, one of which was (Cartooning with) Yardley Jones. I thought "Wow! A cartooning course on TV. It struck me that the medium was just right for it. Because how often do you get to see a real cartoonist at work. It is very easy to see the finished product in a book, but it is actually quite daunting to see a cartoon (being made)....The promo drew me in."

"I got into (The Business of Managing Professionals) because I sort of graze like a cow on TVOntario and I channel hop and I don't like much of what I see on commercial TV but I do like what I see on TVOntario and channel 17. So I saw this guy talking about managerial decision making and how they work with people who are creative..."

2. Previous Experience

Many of the participants had some previous experience with the subject matter, and were using TVOntario courses as a supplement. It was also used as an introduction in some cases where people 'happened' across the material. Some comments are given below.

"I did take nutrition at university, so (The Weight Craze) was a little bit my field."

"I had gone looking for things on exercise for this presentation (a presentation on exercise, part of requirements for an education degree). I thought (Exercise and Health) would maybe consolidate it, give me everything up to date."

"I've been fairly involved in cartooning and looking at other people's cartooning. A couple of times, taking courses too. Night school courses. I found that night school was just too long. So I'd already done this..."

"I've had a number of courses at TVOntario, and always found them excellent (before Yardley Jones)....I took commercial art in 1975. I took Watercolor, as well as Yardley Jones."

"I was really interested for about a year, in diet and health, and exercise and health. (Exercise and Health) just caught my eye."

3. Spring-Summer Schedule

Most in the focus group didn't care *when* the course was offered; a few thought Spring-Summer was inconvenient for study, because they would be busy with outdoor or other activities. Several comments were:

> "I think the reason I missed some of the (Exercise and Health) programs was because (they were broadcast) in reasonably good weather. I'd rather be outside in my spare time – either working or in the garden."
>
> "It doesn't make a difference to me. Spring, Summer, Winter or Fall. If the content is really interesting I will take any course any time."
>
> "I hesitated to spend the time in the summer to read the literature (on the Business of Managing Professionals). I'd rather go out and do some bike riding or whatever and I'd rather do (the course) in the more 'slummy' days: you know, when there's nothing to do, and you can sit down and apply yourself, not wanting to go out and swim and stuff like that."

4. Use of Materials

Most registrants did not utilize all the material (even among the focus group registrants, which seemed to tend to have more 'motivated' registrants) Often the print material was purchased and/or received well after the programs were seen. Some who taped the programs used the programs with the print material in an 'integrated' fashion; others did not.

Some had difficulty using the print materials because they could not connect it with the programs because the print material did not mirror the program content. Others expressed having difficulty because they could not remember the programs when using the print material. The registrants made several suggestions to remedy these problems and improve the materials. They suggested having the materials follow the programs more closely, providing program summaries in the materials as well as elaborations on what was covered in the programs (i.e., more depth). To some extent the reactions to the materials, from focus group participants, were more negative than the responses in the telephone interviews. This may be likely due to the dynamics of focus groups. As was stated previously, a large amount of time is spent trying to draw out any comments that may be useful to improve TVO programming.

Most participants had no real idea of what the material consisted of when they ordered it. There was often a difference between what they expected and what they received, and this was thought to be a problem. When together in a focus group setting, participants noted the great variation in the quality of the print materials. In this set of focus groups the registrants heard about the print material that accompanied five courses. Rather than talk about their print materials in isolation, as those interviewed by telephone did, the registrants had a basis for comparison. The five courses had very different accompanying print material. The materials ranged from an accompanying guide which did not cover the program content to a set of comprehensive integrated support materials including tapes, study guide, text and workbook. Some were thought superior, others were criticized. *If they were impressed with the materials they had received, they were interested in ordering*

again; if they didn't like the materials, they wouldn't order again. Some verbatim comments are provided:

"I mostly read the materials, I would have liked to have watched it. Part of the problem was that the course was well underway, when I happened on Episode 6. I would have liked to watch it through, but I mostly read it."

"I got into the book that they sent and the program got a little bit too advanced for me. What I needed was to watch the program and right afterwards get into the feel of things. 'Cause I think the actual program (Cartooning With Yardley Jones) seemed more like a catalyst for ideas than just looking through the book. I'd have to see it. They don't offer videos for that – (Cartooning) – do they? I think they had a video for Rock School."

"I thought the programs themselves were really excellent and the speaker himself was really good. When the materials arrived I was really expecting not to worry any more about note-taking because it is difficult to focus your attention on the screen and at the same time to take notes...When I looked at the print material, I was really very disappointed. Most of what (the host) said is not part of the course material. So unless you taped (the programs) or made notes you've really lost, because the course material doesn't provide you with the information."

"It is your expectations of the course that are going to dictate your degree of satisfaction. So if the promos spell out, in exact, uncompromising terms, what you can expect to get out of the course, then you can have alot more satisfied viewers."

5. Taping

Most focus group participants in all four groups taped the programs. (Those who did not tape either did not have a VCR or couldn't use their VCR properly to record). Participants sometimes used the programs and the print materials in a different way when they recorded programs: they tended to be more interactive, rather than passive. All groups expressed interest in buying tapes. However, they were confused about TVOntario copyright and tape policy.

The following are several of their comments:

"I tape everything off the VCR anyway"

"Having compared the two – sitting with a drawing pad and watching the show line – and compare that to sitting with the drawing pad and having it on tape – the tape is much better. I strongly feel that an education show should not just have presentation, but the opportunity for you to do stuff in some physical way. And of course, in drawing, that's a natural. It's got to involve you in some physical way. So I would watch the show, stop the tape, scribble away, then see what (the host) is up to, scramble (the tape) back and see how he did something. It is more convenient. An exercise show would be another place where that makes good sense. There was also a book that came with it. I liked that....There were good exercises in the book, but I didn't follow them that much. But you had to stop (Yardley Jones on tape) because he is so knowledgeable, that he can leave you behind. He oversimplifies it – it is more complicated, if you don't know what you're doing. And if you can stop the VCR, then you can do it. (Moderator: did you watch the programs and then read the material?) I watched the programs, then watched the tapes after."

"I don't understand the philosophy (of taping). I don't see why a person couldn't even bring their own blank tape to TVOntario if they've missed a segment, and copy it."

6. Do Participants Think of Home Studies Courses as Courses?

There is a great deal of uncertainty over this. Some definitely thought of it as a 'course'; others thought of it as an optional print support that you could order, in much the same way that PBS will offer material related to a program. It is difficult to ascertain, but the subject and type of material probably made a difference. If the subject was more 'academic' and the material closely resembled "school" material, participants were more likely to describe it as a course, "French in Action registrants were most likely to describe what they took as a course; "Cartooning with Yardley Jones" participants were less likely to. Participants were hesitant about the term, but could not come up with alternatives. Even when describing the 'course' they are often referring to the programs only. When coming up with alternatives, "instructional," "educational," "information" were often used. The comments below illustrate these ideas:

"I've watched a number of these courses and I haven't, um, I guess subscribed to them or asked for materials. Like the architecture course (The Science of Architecture), the cartooning course (Cartooning With Yardley Jones), I've watched, (as well as) part of the watercolour course (Focus on Watercolor). I haven't seen French in Action but I was interested in finding out about that. And I find all of them very interesting. And I don't consider them as courses, but I think they're educational programs more than anything. That's the angle I would take and (another participant: "Entertaining – educational".) Exactly...Because it's called a course, I tend to interpret that it will have more, um, meat to it than a purely educational program that it out to sort of hitch people. So perhaps calling it a course attracted me more than anything. But on watching it....I wouldn't call it a course."

"They're not really courses. They're like subjects in a way. "Courses" is like, really locked into the academic experience one has, and no matter how much you like this course, it's not like the same kind of total experience one gets. And courses interact with one another. The lucky person is able to have one to three years in which they have courses which contribute to each other. So it doesn't seem that monumental. It is a course of study, a discrete amount of material. I wouldn't say you are correct in using the term. I don't really know what you'd call it..."

"It's sort of like a learning package."

"A course is more formal. I think that's the problem with learning French, where you need practice and you need to hear other people speak and you need to hear feedback as to how other people are doing. Perhaps a TV and book are not everybody's way of learning. Perhaps 'course' puts people off because it sound as if you have to take it more seriously..."

"I think it depends on your interest. If you have something like Dealing With Dogs or Great Restaurants of Ontario, that to me is an information program. You're learning something and take notes. And it depends on the material. If it's a long series, like (French in Action), then I would describe it as a course. If it's a long series throughout the year, then I would call it a course. Like Geology or French I would take more seriously, so in my mind I would consider it a course."

"(French in Action) I would take as a course. Eventually if I learn enough, I hope to go and do a test and get a credit."

"(Exercise and Health) was an educational program on lifestyle..."

"I look at TVOntario as a big vat of knowledge. I don't really think of it as a course. The French (French in Action) obviously was. It was structured and you were achieving something. But I think it's just a fund of general knowledge and you can adapt it to aspects of whatever you do..."

7. Knowledge of Other Courses

Participating registrants had very little knowledge of the number or range of courses available. This is rather surprising, considering that the focus group sample had many multiple registrants, previous registrants, and subscribers to Signal: one would have expected them to be more informed about TVOntario offerings more than other Home Studies registrants, or the general public. The groups felt TVOntario may not be marketing the courses as effectively as possible, although they expressed understanding of resource limitations. Some comments are provided:

"I thought there were about 5...I don't watch TVOntario that much."

"I would have guessed 30 courses."

"When I recommend them virtually nobody has heard of them. And it's dreadful. First of all I would make sure they're pinned up in all the libraries."

"Is there anything that shows what all the programs are? Like some of the management ones I would be interested in (note: this was a Weight Craze participant). But I'm not home during the day and I certainly don't look through the TVGuide and I don't look past my bedtime. If it happens to be on and if I'm watching TV, if I'm home that night, I watch it. Like that Fitness and Health, I would have really liked to have seen that one, and there was another one that was repeated more than once. And there are a few others like that. I'd probably like to take quite a few of these things, brush up on my French, etc. Is there anywhere where you can (find out about them), beside reading the TVGuide?"

Interviewer: would you have an idea of how many courses?

"A dozen"

"Ten, fifteen".

"How many do you have?"

Interviewer: It depends during the summer there were 61.

"Sixty-one?"

"It was a surprise to me."

"It was a surprise to me too. I'd seen the (TVOntario) bulletin. I'd never seen 61 in the bulletin..."

"And you know, the prime-time promotional stuff, you don't see that at all. You see "the next episode of Man And His World, or The Day the Universe Changed. The next Nova. I don't think you see any of this stuff. I tripped over a wonderful program all about computer animation and experimental film. I couldn't find when the hell it was on. I wanted to take every one of them...But it didn't ever seem to be promoted."

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Registration

Around two thirds of the telephone interview participants first found out about the course through the TVOntario on-air promotion, or through watching the programs. This is similar to findings of most other Evaluation and Project Research evaluations of Part-time Learning courses, and Part-time Learning/Home Studies records. It indicates, among other things, that other forms of advertising and publishing have been ineffective. For example, there was an extensive advertising campaign in Ontario newspapers, yet no one in the sample indicated they had come across these print ads. As a result it may be worthwhile to reconsider an expanded print ad strategy. One exception is the Home Studies catalogue, which was sent to those who responded to an on-air promotion for more information, and was also included in Signal magazine. Fourteen percent of the telephone sample found out about their course through this means.

In the focus groups, several participants indicated that they came across the course through accidentally seeing the programs. This pattern may become more widespread as television remote devices increase in use. It also points out the 'accidental' nature of much Home Studies registration. Registrants may not enrol in courses as a result of planning, but in an almost 'fortuitous' or chance manner (in fact, focus group participants did not think of themselves as enrolling, but as ordering material – an important difference.)

Reasons for Registration

Home Studies registrants (previously Part-time Learning) are usually divided into two categories: those who desire to learn very specific types of information, usually related to work or existing hobbies, and those who register out of "general interest." The first reason is goal-oriented, the second more process-oriented. Most registrants in previous evaluations of Part-time Learning courses appear to register for goal-oriented reasons: the telephone and focus group participants were no exception.

Nor where these participants neophytes to the subject matter. This may not be surprising. Participants were interested in the subject material (e.g., in sailing or watercolor painting) well before they discovered TVOntario courses on the subject. The more motivated would have found information on the subject through some other source: another course, a textbook, etc. Home Studies courses rarely seem to be the first step in a search for knowledge, but serve as an intermediate step or a supplement to knowledge acquisition. This is important to note because these courses are often designed to introduce a subject, yet attract registrants who are looking for more advanced information (see, for example, the summative evaluation of Coming To A Factory Near You, on CAD/CAM design Report No. 12–1987-88.).

Utilization of Materials

Many Evaluation and Project Research evaluations have found that Home Studies registrants do not engage in the usual 'linear' approach to materials (starting at point 1 and going to point 2, etc). They are likely to watch some or most of the programs and read some or most of the material, depending on their schedule constraints (e.g., enough time, access to materials) and learning goals (they may not read material or watch programs they consider to be irrelevant).

A similar pattern can be seen with the telephone interview participants for this study. Slightly over half the participants read most or all of their workbook or textbook; slightly under half saw most or all of the programs, often during the week after 6 pm.

Discussion with focus group participants indicated that some participants had difficulty using the print material because they could not connect it to the programs: they could not remember the programs (having received the material from TVOntario after seeing the programs), or they were expected to use information in the program, but could not.

Many (up to half) taped at least one program on a VCR. In focus group discussion, those who hadn't taped indicated that they would have, if they had a VCR, or could understand how to record on their VCR[2].

When they ordered the print material, most participants seemed to have no real idea of what it consisted. Sometimes there was, as a result, a difference between what participants expected, and what they received from TVOntario.

Previous Educational Experience

It has been shown repeatedly that Home Studies registrants are a highly credentialed lot, with a pronounced range of post-secondary experience. The telephone interview evaluation showed an additional characteristic: most (61 percent) have taken continuing or distance education in the last five years. This shows, if nothing else, an openness to the concepts and structure of formal education outside of the traditional post-secondary structure.

Knowledge of Other Courses

Participants in the focus groups had a very limited knowledge of Home Studies offerings outside the course they had registered in. For example, few knew that Home Studies was offering 61 courses over the Spring-Summer session (many guessed 10 or 15), or had an idea of the topics available. Such a lack of knowledge may be related to how most registrants find out about their courses: through on-air promotions and coming across the programs while they are being broadcast. Registrants would not learn very much about other courses in this manner. Their knowledge of other, concurrent courses would depend on coming across other programs, seeing other on-air promotions, and reading

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[2] It seems that many people buy VCRs to buy movies but have trouble figuring out how to record "off-air", which is, after all, a more complicated procedure.

descriptions contained in Signal magazine. Most *casual* viewers of TVOntario (the majority of viewers and Homes Studies registrants) would not likely come access this knowledge except on an accidental basis.

Importance of Season in Decision to Register

Much emphasis had been given to the Spring-Summer schedule because it was thought to be a more advantageous time for most people. Such appeared not the case: most participants in both telephone and focus group samples said that the season was irrelevant, or that ordering in spring or summer was somewhat disadvantageous. While a fifth of the telephone sample would prefer to register in the summer again (usually because they had more time) more than a quarter said they would not (usually because they were busy with other summer activities), *while 40 percent said their decision to register would depend on the course, not on the season. Nearly two thirds had registered in the spring or summer because they just found out about the course, or thought spring/summer would be the only time the course was offered.*

Concept of "Courses"

This was a difficult subject to discuss with participants. In the telephone interview evaluation, a majority said they would describe what they took as "a television course, " or as "a course." However, many were hesitant about this choice: it seemed, in some cases, to be a term used in default of a more exact description. The focus group participants likewise expressed uncertainty. Some thought of it as a course; others as optional print support that one could order, not different from optional material that can be ordered from other networks and programs (e.g., the transcript of television programs, or a book related to a documentary).

Home Studies registrants are, for the most part, experienced with the educational system (most of the sample were postsecondary graduates) and have experience with distance or continuing education. They would naturally associate structured learning with the "course" organizational pattern, but may not be as familiar with nuances of non-formal learning – i.e., forms of non-credentialed learning. The more a Home Studies offering resembles their experience of a "course", the more they are likely to consider it as one. In the focus groups, participants thought "French in Action" (highly structured) was a course, but were not as certain about "Exercise and Health" (where the print material was not integrated with the programs). This may be an aspect of which the Home Studies area might want to investigate further, because print support appears not to be integrated with programs in many Home Studies courses.[3]

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[3] Integration may also be important because most in the telephone evaluation thought that the programs were the most important element; the print was secondary. If print material is not integrated with the programs, it may not be thought of as useful.

Advertising

Participants did not suggest anything especially different or innovative: they recommended print advertising (which so far may have been somewhat ineffective) and on-air ads (which are already being done to some extent). One suggestion, which may be useful, was to use the Home Studies catalogues as advertising pamphlets, to increase awareness of the type and breadth of Home Studies courses.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Evaluation findings indicate that the print advertising used for Home Studies may be of limited effectiveness. Many registrants discovered the course they registered for by seeing a promotion for Home Studies or the series, or they saw one of the programs itself. This strategy should be reconsidered in future marketing efforts.

2. Participants appear to have limited understanding of the type and number of other Home Studies courses that are offered. Including the Home Studies catalogues in the learning packages would give participants an idea of what other courses are being offered. It may also give registrants the notion of Home Studies as a distinct entity within TVOntario.

3. Focus group discussions have indicated that the Home Studies catalogues may be an effective marketing tool. It may be useful to consider ways to distribute more of these catalogues to interested parties.

4. Home Studies uses terms like "registration" and "course" in reference to their learning systems, yet participants may not associate the support material with the terminology of formal education systems; or, their expectations of the material may be misled by this terminology. Many registrants are highly familiar with postsecondary institutions and with distance education; they may expect a "course" to have different components than those they receive in the mail from TVOntario.

5. In planning print support material, care should be taken to make sure that it is interactive and integrated with the television programs. Findings indicate that material which is not associated with the programs may be considered less useful.

6. Participants appear to have limited understanding of what to expect from the course materials. On-air promotions should indicate more exact descriptions of what the support material consists of. Focus group participants found that materials vary a great deal from course to course. Some learning materials were considered to be quite comprehensive while others were considered to be lacking depth and seemed quite sparse. Registrants did not know what to expect and this bothered them.

7. Consider advertising a money-back guarantee for those who are dissatisfied with course materials. Since potential registrants cannot see the materials they are reluctant to 'take a chance', particularly if they have been dissatisfied with course materials in the past.

8. Most registrants had already looked for information on the course topics or were somewhat familiar with the course content, yet most courses were introductory courses. It may be useful to rethink the level of some course offerings, particulary since a lot of registrants seem have a "goal-oriented" approach to the courses as opposed to taking them for general interest. Registrants may be looking for more advanced information.

9. Evaluation participants expressed unfamiliarity with VCR copyright regulations and the purchase of tapes. Home Studies may wish to address this.

10. It appears that the season the course was offered in was not a factor in a registrant's decision to register in the course. It may be useful to rethink the strategy of expanding the spring-summer schedule for television-based courses to use the summer as a new target season for courses.